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15 October 1952

Draft Proposal of Motion Picture Program

1. Presented below are my very informal comments regarding subject proposal. In making these comments, I should state that I am strongly in favor of audio-visual educational aids in specific fields and for limited purposes. Briefly, my personal views regarding visual audio methods are as follows:

a. Their principal value is in the presentation of exceptionally mechanical or technical processes.

b. Secondly, they can successfully put across abstract concepts such as philosophical, social or political ideas only if the production is of the highest quality and is carefully geared to the intellectual level of the audience.

c. Motion picture presentations are most uneconomical in trying to present routine organizational lectures, and administrative or clerical methods and procedures. The frequency of change and the need for continuing reference to such information warrants chart and lecture presentation and inclusion in Agency written regulations and procedures.

d. The use of motion pictures to present welcoming, morale and inspirational lectures is psychologically unsound. The appearance of an Agency personage "on the screen" when he could be there in person is an affront to the audience rather than an inspiration.

e. Audio-visual training methods neither create nor change the basic intelligence of the audience. They are most effective on people of low intelligence or on people lacking independently acquired concepts or knowledge on the subject presented.

2. Based upon the above personal concepts, I am instinctively biased against the proposal set forth in the draft proposal. In attempting to justify and support what I believe is your true objective, I believe you have dangerously over-sold the proposal. There are overtones of empire building, enthusiasm and panacea which I believe create instinctive resistance in the reader.

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3. For the above reason, my best recommendation is that the proposal be reoriented to place all emphasis upon the true objective of providing the best possible training to Agency students in the technical aspects of covert operations.

4. In terms of the above, I would also suggest considerable revision of the form and content of presentation memoranda to the Project Review Committee and related changes or deletions of the supporting tabulations. An outline of my suggested approach is attached.


Special Assistant to the
Deputy Director (Admin.)

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SA/DDA:EDE:mes (15 October 1952)